

# Pritchard's matchwinner

Wycombe W. 1, Wealdstone 0

LARRY PRITCHARD'S 85th minute match-winner on Saturday left Amateur Cup visitors Wealdstone in two minds. Should they feel robbed by such a late breakthrough, or just thankful Wycombe weren't already hovering near double figures?

There was ample scope for football philosophers in this first round tie. But Wanderers had no doubts on the subject.

As one, the Loakes Park kop roared its delight and relief, having seen the boys in blue do everything but score from the first whistle.

Victory always seemed a formality. Yet when it finally came, many were already resigning themselves to a replay at Lower Mead.

And they had good reason to grow increasingly sceptical as chances were created and wasted with stunning regularity against a team hoping to make up for their deficiencies by using a tight 4-4-2 formation.

Wealdstone's all-out defensive challenge screamed: "You want us, come and get us!" Wycombe obliged, and that in a nutshell is what the tie was all about.

Following recent off-colour performances, much of Wanderers' gloss returned. Teamwork proved the essence and determination, the driving force behind them, with Vince Faulkner

## in nick of time

By  
**Mike Whitesman**

making a fine stand-in in defence while Ted Powell ventured forward to strengthen midfield.

Unquestionably it was his most convincing 90 minutes yet in a link role. Until Saturday he had seemed stifled away from his usual spot in the back four.

Further encouragement came via Bernie Bremer's most inspired game in weeks and Pritchard's renewed vigour, suggesting he might at last be emerging from a prolonged spell of mediocrity.

Loakes Park finished littered with goal chances carelessly thrown away. Each man in turn had Swain's net at his mercy sometime during the onslaught, only to show benevolence uncommon in Cup competition.

So with a share of luck, an instinct for survival, and a stubborn resistance, Wealdstone almost made it.

Bremer and Pritchard supplied Wycombe's early fire.

As Blues attacked full-back Alan Dafforn headed a Pritchard shot away as the Blues' number eight claimed the best of a tackle to work his way through to a virtually empty goal-line.

Tony Horseman, as unlucky as any on the day, also headed a Bremer cross outside a post after a criss-crossing movement which had Wealdstone twitching nervously after 19 minutes.

And so it went on. Pritchard received a Powell free-kick only to lift it over the crossbar in another inviting situation after 23 minutes.

Meanwhile Wealdstone adamantly refused to be drawn out. Even when they won a free-kick midway through the period, only two strikers went up.

An injury to Barry Baker's right leg gave substitute Johnny Hutchinson an earlier than expected chance to complete Wanderers' trio of former Wealdstone players on-field. If Bremer, and to a lesser degree Searle, had been a source of nuisance to the visitors, then Hutchinson was to prove most menacing of all.

With half-time looming and Wanderers still looking for something tangible to show for their efforts, Pritchard abused a golden chance afforded him by a Searle pass, toeing his shot wide of an open goal.

Back at the lonely end—John Maskell could quite easily have knitted himself another 'keeper's jersey in between times—Townsend sent in a knee-high shot that totally missed the mark but nearly unbalanced a photographer to the side of the netting.

But Swain's was only a brief respite.

First, Dave Yerby, then Alan Pentecost (with a wild, flying header) and then a Cliff Rasley free-kick suggested Wealdstone might be a little more willing to mix it for the new period.

They weren't, however, and in the final 35 minutes Wycombe returned to the offensive with a vengeance.

The 61st minute climaxed Horseman's frustration when Williams again intervened to divert his shot on to a post, and the return, also from Horseman, was parried off the line by Swain.

they plugged away in almost fanatical fashion for the long overdue goal.

With five minutes and a little extra for injury time to play, Powell ventured all the way up-field and timed his cross just right to catch Wealdstone exposed in the middle.

Pritchard darted forward through the Wealdstone wall and loosed a rising shot from inside the visitors' area.

The crowd erupted, Wycombe rejoiced, and Wealdstone, beaten 1-0 by Wanderers in the third round last season, accepted the repeat scoreline as inevitable.

But things still wouldn't go Wanderers way entirely. Another slicing cross was met by Pritchard, who beat Swain to the jump only to see his header rock a post three minutes from time.

**WYCOMBE WANDERERS:** J. Maskell; P. Fuschillo, K. Blunt; E. Powell, J. Delaney, V. Faulkner; E. Bremer, B. Baker (sub.: J. Hutchinson, 34th min.); K. Searle, L. Pritchard, A. Horseman.

**WEALDSTONE:** C. Swain; A. Dafforn, C. Hand; R. Williams, G. Olson, C. Rapley (sub. W. Johnstone, 73rd min.); R. Townsend, T. Mahon, J. Ritchie, A. Pentecost, D. Yerby.

Referee: L. Leonard (Luton).  
Half-time: 0-0. Goalscorer: Wycombe—Pritchard (85).

Attendance: 4,345

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The tension went from hot to bright red and, sure enough, two minutes later, an incident involving pushing and shoving by Paul Fuschillo and Yerby developed.

Fuschillo will be remembered more readily for his speed and decisive football, however.

The list of scorned chances grew to alarming proportions, swelled by Horseman miskicking a shot wide when handsomely set up in front of goal.

Wealdstone hinted some more aggressive thinking with the substitution of Billy Johnstone for Rapley. But the young Scot, who had scored the only goal in their recent Floodlight League win over Wycombe, hardly got a sniff of the ball.

Into the closing stages, the position seemed hopeless and all Wycombe's labour wasted. But